STUDYING GENDER AT THE LESSONS OF RUSSIAN LANGUAGE:
SYMBOLIC AND SEMANTIC APPROACHES

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ABSTRACT

The article is devoted to the studying gender at the lessons of Russian language. This paper examines the symbolic meaning of the word and reveals the concept of the word semantics relatively to inanimate nouns. To reveal the matter of the problem the words-concepts are used as an example. In the article the authors connect the essence of gender category with symbolic and semantic hypothesis of the ancient grammarians, according to which natural biological category "sexus" is correlated with grammatical category "genus". As a didactic material the authors present quotes from literary works, proverbs and sayings, which focus on the development of speech, enrichment of vocabulary and the formation of cultural competence of students.

Having analyzed the structural and semantic principle of study of the category of gender in the Russian language by the example of culture lexemes, having studied the literature on research problem, having considered a learner as a linguistic personality, putting forward the lingvocultural approach to learning the Russian language as dominant, authors come to the conclusion, that the symbolic-semantic principle helps multifaceted language training.

Key words: symbolic and semantic approaches, gender category, inanimate nouns, linguistic methodology, Russian language lesson

1. INTRODUCTION

The study of gender category of nouns refers to the section of studying morphological categories. The effectiveness, the success of teaching gender category to a greater extent depends on the correct and well-developed technique. First of all, learners should become acquainted with the basic theoretical principles of the study of the grammatical category of gender and acquire strong skills of appropriate use of generic forms in the connected speech.

Many scientific linguistic and methodical works are devoted to the study of grammatical categories. Some researchers justify the necessity of the implementation of functional-semantic, competent, text-oriented, lingvocultural approaches to the study of nominal parts of speech. The authors highlighted the important problems to be solved in studying the morphology within school course of Russian language.

Another scholar-methodologist, the author of textbooks on teaching the Russian language, E.I. Litnevskaya focuses on the use of the systemic principle in the morphological characteristics of a word. According to E.I. Litnevskaya, systemic principle "allows you to pay attention to the specifics of grammar categories, in particular to the fact that all morphological features have their formal expression in the language - the paradigmatic (in-word) or syntagmatic (out-of-word) and are expressed by inflections both of the word itself and of coordinated with it lexemes " [Litnevskaya & Bagranceva, 2006].

Undoubtedly, each of these approaches can be implemented in the study of the gender category, because in the modern Russian language grammar category of gender of nouns is an independent classificatory (not a word-changing), obligatory (compulsory for all word forms of the singular), semantic category with a structural significance.

The gender category is particular by nature, and scientists often put questions about its appearance, about the very essence of this category. Such questions as - why in the Russian language, for example, vetor (the wind) – is the masculine gender and voda (the water) – is feminine, why dom (the house) – is the masculine and izba (the hut) - is feminine? - are very often. And often pupils at Russian language lessons find it difficult to answer these questions, which further leads to misunderstanding of the essence of the category of gender and to the inability to use nouns correctly.

2. METHODS

According to the symbolic-semantic hypothesis, which appeared in the ancient period, the grammatical category of gender originated under the influence of natural givens - the presence of people of different sexes. Supporters of the symbolic-semantic hypothesis considered that the natural biological category sexus relates to grammatical category genus. So, the creators of the names gave male names to the rivers and female
names to the seas and oceans, because the rivers flow into the seas and lakes. The sun had the masculine
gender and the moon - as it gets the light from the sun - is of the feminine gender. Analyzing linguistic signs
and denotations, G.A. Khairoutdinova sets up a hypothesis about the principles of distribution of the nouns by
gender. According to the linguist, the denotation is re-presented by substantives of masculine gender if the
word updates such features as large (in size), strong, active, courageous, and by substantives of feminine
gender, if they bear such features as small, weak, passive, feminine [Murzina & Khairoutdinova, 2015]. British
scientists Corbett and Fraser note that "gender systems always have the semantic core" [Corbett & Fraser,
2000]. And this "semantic information is culture-bearing: it reflects a way of conceptualizing reality" [Nurullina,
2014].

At the Russian language lessons when studying the category of gender it is important to explain to the
learners that in the very nature of the word there is a symbolic basis. Inanimate noun which has no correlate in
a sexual difference is asemantic. However, in poetic language, in works of folklore a word obtains a symbol
value and becomes semantic. Therefore, when analyzing the grammatical category of gender the crucial, the
underlying will be the symbolic-semantic principle.

In antiquity, all the surrounding nature was perceived as alive like a human being. Words-concepts
denoting the natural elements (fire, water, air, wind) occupy a central place in the works of the ancient
grammarians, because the elements are considered to be primary elements that make up everything that
exists. These words are inanimate nouns, which distributed to genders do not form any meaningful and
semantic oppositions. However, these referents get a sign of sex in the metaphors in literary works. Many
poets animate the natural elements; in the action of the elements there is a huge magical power.

One of the powerful elements is a wind. This noun is of masculine gender. Extra linguistic motivation of
relatedness of this word to the masculine gender is in the estimatedness of interpretation: the wind as well as a
person of the male sex, is characterized by the presence of force, activity and energy. In pagan
representations of the ancient Slavs the wind was regarded as a living being with feelings and thoughts. It had
a human look and was endowed with reason and will.

Russian fairy tales, songs and charms are filled with appeals to the winds for help as to the living and
ready to help out in trouble creatures. For example, in A.S. Pushkin’s poem Yelisei appeals to the wind: "Wind,
oh, Wind! Lord of the sky. // Herding flocks of clouds on high, // Stirring up the dark-blue ocean, // Setting all the
air in motion. // Unafraid of anyone // Saving God in heaven alone! [Pushkin A.S.]."

So, the noun wind becomes semantic during personification, metaphorization. M.V. Laskova notes that
"pervasive character of personification – is one of the proofs, firstly, of semantic (motivation) nature of gender, and
secondly, of the connection of grammatical gender with the cultural traditions of native speakers" [Laskova, 2001].
The figurative personification based on a stylistic use of nouns, can serve various expressive purposes. With personification things get gender characteristics.

There are many proverbs, sayings, riddles with a keyword wind. Verbal artifacts reflect the culture, life,
history, the spirit of the Russian people. Therefore, at the lessons of the Russian language when studying a
grammatical topic culturological competence can be formed as well. In addition, proverbs and sayings are a
great tool for teachers to conduct fruitful work on the development of speech and enriching the vocabulary of
students. Examples of proverbs and sayings about the wind can be: Foliage is confused by the wind. and the
man - by the word // Bad is the wind that brings no good // To call the wind - to disrupt voice in vain // Sow the
wind - reap the storm.

Another natural element that has a destructive power is the fire. However, in contrast to the wind, the
fire, above all is considered to be a symbol of home and comfort. For example, the ancient Slavs worshiped
the fire of the earth and heaven. The fire was seen as a living being that is born, lives, reproduces, grows old and
dies. It has a tongue that licks stove stones. It drinks and washes, sleeps when it is blown out, walks along the
earth, speaks and gets angry and takes revenge of anyone who treats it disrespectfully. Sometimes the fire
was even distinguished by sex - male and female, and was given the human name. [Mullagalieva, 2006].

The Slavs called the fire Svarozhich, considering it the son of the sky - Svarog. The fire was worshiped as a
godhood guarding the wealth of home, peace and happiness of all members of the clan; the life of the
family was built around it.

Deep semantics of the sacred fire, the idolization of it can be seen in Russian language traditions,
beliefs, taboo rules of behavior. For example, if a fire in someone's fireplace was blown out, it promised
superstitious imagination all sorts of trouble and was known as a harbinger of family extinction. To quarrel
when lighting a fire was a sin.

Russian people attach great importance to the so-called consecrated fire. It is the fire which has been
taken out of the church after the great religious rites and at the same time, a particularly exceptional power and
grace [Mullagalieva, 2006].

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great tool for teachers to conduct fruitful work on the development of speech and enriching the vocabulary of
students. Examples of proverbs and sayings about the fire can be: From the frying pan into the fire (From one
disaster into a bigger one) // There is no smoke without a fire (Don't speak without a reason, even if the
conversation does not reflect the truth quite right. Everything has a reason) // Do not play (joke) with a fire
<you'll get burned > (Do not do anything that could result in unpleasant, dangerous consequences, do harm to
3. DISCUSSION

In the analysis of the grammatical material a concept of symbol often becomes crucial and fundamental. Symbols are produced in every nation on basis of comparison. Thus, expanding the scope of the denoted concept the word or phrase in the poetic language often becomes an important symbol. The symbolic beginning is inherent in the very nature of the word. Symbolic-semantic approach, therefore, appears as one of the major factors in the formation of lingvocultural competence of linguistic personality.

“Learning is a product of interaction. Learners might interact with instructors and tutors, with content and / or with other people. Many educators expend enormous amounts of effort to designing their learning to maximize the value of those interactions” [Tanya Elias, 2011]. Learners are actively involved in receiving, interpreting and correcting of new knowledge, broadening and deepening of their own ideas about the world.

Changes in the current educational paradigm are connected with the fact that the personality from the object turns into the subject of study: the learner is actively involved in receiving, interpreting and correcting of new knowledge, broadening and deepening of their own ideas about the world. The most important achievement of the cognitive activity is the possibility of processing the largest possible amount of information. However, in our view, to reduce the cognitive activity only to the production and processing of information is a mistake: the human and spiritual should be formed and developed in a man, which gives him the introduction to the national culture.

In the process of teaching, developing and educating of a student the role of the Russian language as a worldview subject, ensuring the unity and interaction of language, culture and identity is undeniable. Lingvocultural approach to teaching Russian language allows to solve the problem of forming communication skills, of actualization of sense-forming, reflective and other functions of the learner’s personality.

4. SUMMARY

Having analyzed the structural and semantic principle of study of the category of gender in the Russian language by the example of culture lexemes, having studied the literature on research problem, having considered a learner as a linguistic personality, putting forward the lingvocultural approach to learning the Russian language as dominant, we concluded that the symbolic-semantic principle helps multifaceted language training. This is determined by the following factors:

1) at the lessons of Russian language students have an opportunity to approach the samples, culture phenomena. Literary texts, works of folklore contribute to the formation of linguistic personality of students.

2) modern methods of teaching Russian language is justified by a big increase in the anthropological diversity of participants in the educational activities; Russian lesson aims to subjectivation, individualization and personalization of education.

3) organization of educational activities, accompanied by the forthcoming of educational and methodic works; the use of effective and unique means of organizing the educational activities.

4) the appearance of a new didactics with a base in the content of education as a way of thinking and acting; processing the lingvocultural approach to teaching Russian language.
5. CONCLUSION

The significance of the above-listed factors is determined by the fact that they contribute to the development of creative thinking of students, to raising lingvocultural competence, to the formation of a skill to be included in the international scientific, professional and cultural context.

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REFERENCES